

The background of the book cover is a detailed black and white illustration of a theater. The top half shows a balcony with a decorative railing. The bottom half shows a large, dense crowd of people seated in the main floor of the theater, all facing towards the front. The book's title is printed on a light-colored rectangular area in the center.

# **How to Write**

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# **Moving Picture**

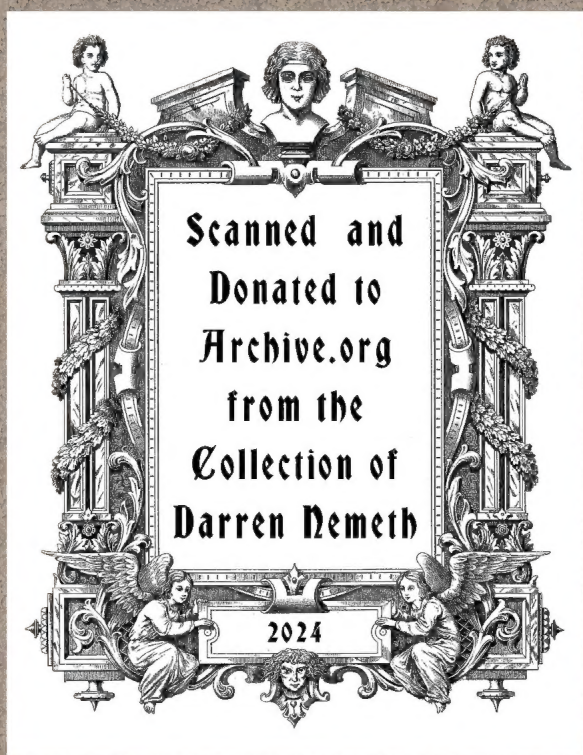
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# **Plays**

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# How to Write a Moving Picture Play



Written in the earnest desire to assist the inexperienced writer to market his ideas, to bring new talent to light and to aid in the advancement of that wonderfully interesting and instructive pastime, The Moving Picture Play. ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

*The Author*

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## CHAPTER 1.

### THE MOVING PICTURE PLAY.

The moving picture or Photoplay is today an established and popular international amusement. From one end of the world to the other the poor, the middle class and the rich alike enjoy the thousands of dramas, comedies and educational films which are produced yearly at enormous expense.

We can all remember the early days of the motion pictures. The reproductions, short, poorly produced and giving the effect of a continual rain storm that soon caused the spectators' eyes to tire. The wiseacres shook their heads. "Motion pictures will never last," they said. Then came their increased popularity.

The producer sought more and better subjects, the length of the films were increased to 1000 feet. Complete stories were told on the screen. With the advancement of the Photoplay thousands of moving picture theaters were opened in all parts of the world. Being low in price and high in quality, the entire universe seemed to flock to them.

Again the wiseacre croaked: "It cannot last long." Again they were wrong. Moving pictures today are more popular than ever. They have taken a firm hold in the affections of pleasure-loving people. It is a far stretch from the short and ridiculous films we used to think so wonderful to the truly marvelous, eleven-reel Photoplay, "Les Miserables," recently produced, which runs for a full three hours. That there are greater glories in store for the moving picture no one will deny.

In looking through the releases of prominent film companies, the author counted from 250 to 300 films released every month in the year. That means that on an average of 3,000 moving picture films are actually placed upon the market every year and if we were to count the many "reserve" films made by the producers, this number would be greatly increased.

At the present time the Vitagraph Company release six films weekly, the Selig, Essanay, Edison and Lubin Companies five films each per week, Kalem and Pathe four each and the Universal Company, composed of a number of auxiliaries alone, release 28 Photoplays weekly. That means that more stories are needed by the film producers each week than may be found in all the magazines published in any given month. Where does this wonderful supply of ideas, plots and material come from? It comes from people in all classes of life—the shop girl, the farmer, the workingman, the novelist, the short story writer, the invalid and who knows how many more professions have added to the gayety of the motion picture world with stories of all kinds.

That there is a demand for Photoplays, no one can deny. That there is a supply is equally true but, with patience and persistence, it should not be difficult for a person of average intelligence to attain success as a Photoplay writer.



## CHAPTER 2.

### THE SUBJECT.

The importance of the subject and title of the Photoplay cannot be overestimated. It is the subject matter which first of all impresses the editor of the film companies and makes him decide for or against your manuscript.

Choose subjects which are generally attractive, clean and interesting, then improve your chance for the production of your play by giving it a clear-cut, attractive title. Do not think that any old name will do. How many times have you stopped to look twice at a poster which had no claim to your attention other than a good title? How many times have you paid your 5c and 10c and attended one certain picture theater, selecting perhaps from a half dozen others in the same neighborhood, simply because the title of one picture seemed especially interesting to you. That will in some measure show you the importance of selecting a good, catchy title for your Photoplay.

You will find titles everywhere, in Biblical sayings, songs, quotations, and wherever your eye may rest. Do not make them too long. Do not let them tell the whole story before you start. Let the title suggest something stirring to the imagination. Such titles as "The Poor Old Soldier" or "The Pathetic Tale of Sadie Jones" are hardly attractive titles though they may tell the general gist of the story.

On the other hand, such titles as "Daddy's Soldier Boy," "The Honor of the Force," "When the West Was Young," "The Land That God Forgot," "The Awakening of Lazy Bones," "High Treason," etc., are all strong titles which would have a tendency to attract, not repel. Incidentally, all of the titles above are well known Photoplays, so do not attempt to use them.

Giving the picture the name of your principal character is also an error, unless the principal character is a well known historical personage. A great many titles have been used time and again for motion picture plays, sometimes being identical and sometimes with slight variation. Avoid such titles as "Brother Against Brother," "For His Mother's Sake," and other hackneyed and well-worn phrases. They may be original to you but there have been other Photoplaywrights who had the same idea long ago. Let the idea suggest the title. If it does not, give your story no name but work out your Scenario and Synopsis, and name it afterwards.

Often like a flash the inspiration of a good clever name will come to your mind, while dwelling upon something entirely different. Be careful in your choice of a title. Those few words will often determine whether a manuscript will be read or returned to you as not acceptable.



## CHAPTER 3.

### DICTIONARY OF MOTION PICTURE TERMS.

If one is to be a carpenter it is highly necessary that he should know the names of all the various tools. If one is to be a Photoplay-wright, it is positively necessary that he master the various technical terms and phrases of the profession.

The editor reads your manuscript perhaps a thousand miles from where you write it. You cannot tell him in a round-about way what you want nor can you send him pictures. You must use the right word at the right time. For that reason a knowledge of technical phrases is a necessity and they should be memorized with great care. A list of the principal phrases follows:

1. **THE EDITOR.** It is he who will read the manuscript you send to the various moving picture manufacturers. He will pass upon the merits or faults and will reward you with a check or rejection. He is generally a man of experience both in literary and motion picture work. It is his work to discern the interesting story from the boresome one. He is often a writer and prepares Photoplays on his own account. The editor is not always infallible. If one editor rejects your manuscript, send it to another as explained later.

2. **THE PRODUCER.** With the producer lies the success or failure of the Photoplay. It is he who visualizes your efforts, sees the characters in life as you picture them, arranges for attractive and suitable stage settings, casts the actors in their respective characters and supervises the making of the picture from start to finish. He is often called the director, the two terms in this case being identical.

3. **RELEASES.** The film manufacturers release a number of films every week, which means they place them upon the market. Instead of saying, therefore, that the Vitagraph Company places six Photoplays a week on the market, we say they release six a week.

4. **FILM.** A film is a transparent strip of celluloid about one inch wide and wound on a roll. Sixteen photographs are made in one second and there are approximately sixteen of these photographs to one foot of film.

5. **REEL.** A reel contains about 1000 feet of film. If there are two stories or subjects on one reel, it is known as a split reel. Often it requires two or more reels to tell a single story and these are called Multiple Reel Subjects.

6. **PLOT.** The word is so common that it requires but little explanation. It is the seed from which your story grows. It is the idea.

7. **SYNOPSIS.** It is demanded by editors that, directly after the title, the Photoplaywright tells the story in short form so that it can be read in a few moments by the busy editor. If the synopsis is interesting, he will read further; if not, he will probably save his time.

8. **CHARACTERS.** This is merely a list of the principal people in your Photoplay. It follows the Synopsis.

9. **SCENARIO.** The scenario is also a necessary part of the manuscript. It takes up each scene and describes the action required in it to help in the unwinding of the story. It is far more complete in detail than the synopsis.



10. **INSERTS.** Under this heading is classed everything about the Photo-play, outside of the action of the characters. For instance, when the picture stops for a moment and you see flashed on the screen "The Rivals Meet" it is an insert. This particular kind of an insert, however, is called a leader. Inserts can also be letters, clippings from newspapers, telegrams, etc.

11. **LEADER.** A leader is a sub-title as above.

12. **CUT IN LEADER.** A "Cut-in" Leader is a special title introduced into the scene after which the action goes back into the same scene. For instance, a man is reading a poem. He is greatly impressed with it. To make the action clear to the audience a leader is introduced in the middle of the scene as follows: "Gentlemen, it's the greatest poem ever written." Then the scene reverts to the man reading the poem and the actions of the others in the scene. Such a leader is called a "Cut-in" leader, cutting into the middle of a scene.

13. **REGISTER.** This term is equivalent to the theatrical phrase "getting it over." This means simply impressing the fact upon the audience. In your Scenario, for instance, you might say "John registers fear." This would show to the producer that it was positively necessary for the actor to give unmistakable signs in pantomime of his great fear so that the spectator would surely understand.

14. **CUT BACK.** This expression is used where it is desired to keep two separate actions constantly alive in the spectator's mind. For instance, if we picture John Franklin mining in the west, under great hardships, and his fiancée lolling in idleness, ease and luxury in the east and work continually from the one to the other, such action is referred to as Cut-Backs.

15. **VISIONS.** Scarcely any explanation is needed for this well-known phrase. If one of your characters sees in his fancy his boyhood days, his absent sweetheart, or anything else for that matter, a vision of such a scene is generally reproduced.

16. **BUST.** The enlargement of some particular part of the scene is called a Bust. If, for instance, a room is filled with people but you desire to show that one character is giving a necklace, secretly, to another, you would necessarily have to enlarge these two persons so that the action would be caught by the spectators. For instance, in the specimen manuscript in Chapter 6, a Bust is introduced in Scene 10 to show a baby crying. This simply means that the camera is placed very close to the infant so that it, and not the scene, predominates.

17. **MASKS.** You have often seen in motion pictures the vision which greets one of the characters while looking through a field glass. Instead of seeing the picture in its usual shape, you see it as though you were actually looking through a field glass. If the character is peeping through a key hole, you will sometimes see the scene played in a frame which suggests a key hole. These are called masks.

18. **PADDING.** If your story is too short for a full reel and still too long for a split reel or if you do not go into details sufficiently, it is probable that the editor will "pad" your manuscript or, in other words, fill in and make the manuscript more complete.



## CHAPTER 4.

### HOW TO CHOOSE THE PLOT.

Every human being has at some time or other been brought in contact with some thoroughly dramatic or equally humorous incident. Many of these occurrences furnish excellent plots for Photoplays. But first you must learn to discern between what is truly dramatic or humorous, and only slightly so. If the latter, let your imagination fill in the hollow places with situations of interest, thus producing a forceful Photoplay.

Do not go too far from home for your first plots. Write on a subject that you know something about. A village youth can write fully and truthfully of small town or country life and his manuscripts will present a more truthful view than the city man's. As a matter of fact, however, the farmer seems anxious to write about the big city and the big city man turns to the farm for his subjects. It is not meant that you should not permit your imagination to work, or that you should keep too close to the fireside. It is suggested, however, that at the start you write on subjects with which you, yourself, are thoroughly familiar. This will save you from making some awkward mistakes which might make your manuscript unacceptable.

In everything we do, we must have an ideal in mind. The Photoplaywright's ambition should be the elevation of the picture drama. Keep away from anything that is coarse or suggestive. Do not make fun of nationalities, religions, or anyone's personal opinions. Remember that they have just as much right to their opinion as you have to yours and they might be offended.

Stories, however, which are in such bad taste seldom reach the production stage, as the editor will refuse them immediately. Keep your stories clean and pure. Try to write Photoplays that the spectator will be better for having seen. Write on American subjects if possible. That is what American producers and the American public wants.

In writing, do not demand what is impossible or impracticable. For instance, your mind may suggest a crash between two trains. No doubt this would prove a very strong and dramatic situation. If the story is exceptionally good, it may be that the producing firm may go to the expense of buying two engines and producing a head-on collision, but they would be far more likely to do so after the quality of your work has been established. Do not introduce scenes requiring special trains. It costs several hundred dollars for their use. Often regular trains can be used at no expense whatever.

The beginner is apt to let his mind run riot. The less you demand of the producer in the way of expense, the better chance you have for the acceptance of your manuscript. Do not introduce too many visions. When you introduce a vision the producer must have his mind upon two pictures at the same time instead of one.

Choose subjects which fit the firm for whom you are writing. If a firm produces only western pictures, it would naturally be folly to send them a manuscript on the French Revolution or any other costume play.

It is a comparatively easy matter to find out what class of subjects the film companies demand. If you attend three or four picture theaters, you will find considerable light on that subject. The way to keep properly informed is to see the pictures the various producing firms are releasing and to read the moving picture trade papers. Both of these courses are strongly advised for the beginner.



The more you study the actors of the various companies, the better chance you will have for the acceptance of your work. For instance, the Vitagraph Company feature those two excellent comedy players, John Bunny and Flora Finch. If you have a story which suits two such characters and it is a good one, you can rest assured that the Vitagraph people will be glad to get it.

On the other hand, if you submit the same story to another company who did not have such excellent comedy forces, they might refuse it. This is just an illustration. Study the players of each company and try to see some particular player, or set of players, in the drama you write. Try to fit their personalities with good, suitable parts.

Some companies feature a woman player. Naturally, if you sent a manuscript which featured a male star, they could not use it or would be obliged to rewrite it considerably before it would fit their purposes. On the other hand, there are other companies who feature male stars and to these your manuscript will prove extremely valuable. In this way, the selection of the company to whom you send your manuscript is an important part of your work.

Recently there has been considerable agitation against gun play in moving pictures and it is only a matter of time before the demand for clean dramas, free from rowdyism, will be so strong that the Photoplaywright who depends upon the bad man of the west, the gun man, the burglar and other such threadbare types of the Photoplay, will find himself with rejected manuscripts by the score.

It is well to keep away from seasonable stories. The average film has a life ranging from six to nine months. Now suppose you write a Christmas story. It may prove very interesting during the month of December; after that no exhibitor will want it.

Try to write stories which will make an equally strong appeal the whole year around. Put your heart and your head in your work. Heart interest should abound in your stories but be careful of an overdose. Choose the wise path—the middle of the road. Too much pathos and emotion is even worse than too little.

Most of the big producing firms have two or three companies and they often have Eastern, Western and Southern casts who produce pictures in these localities.

If your story concerns itself with Florida try to select a company which, at that time, has a cast in Florida. You can do it just as well first as last and it will prove far more satisfactory to you. It is becoming quite customary for motion picture producers to put the author's name upon the film at the beginning of the picture. This brings credit, or discredit, where it belongs. If your play is good and clean, it is an honor to have your name flashed upon the screen. If, on the other hand, it is morbid, vulgar or objectionable, your name will receive its just censure.

Do not go to the other extreme and aim too high. Photoplays, while very popular with even the wealthiest, seems more particularly the poor man's amusement. Go into the foreign sections of any large city and you will find a great many picture theaters, attended regularly by foreigners, many of whom cannot read, write nor speak the English language. For this reason too intricate or classical subjects are not the most desirable.

Follow the safe and sane middle of the road and aim for a greater, brighter and better future for the Photoplay.



## CHAPTER 5.

### CENSORSHIP.

Every Photoplay or film passes before the National Board of Censors previous to its release. This board passes upon the merits of the picture from the standpoint of public morals. A few items of which the board of censors do not approve are the following: Crime, where the story is based upon and woven around crime of any nature. If it is brought in incidentally, in the working out of the story, it will probably be permitted but it must not be repulsive or horrifying. Do not glorify a crook or criminal.

The shooting of a character in cold blood or murder in any form are not desirable, to say the least.

Suicide in any form is a very poor thing to introduce in motion picture plays and is strongly objected to. It takes all kinds of people to make up a motion picture audience, among them many of morbid disposition to whom the suggestion of suicide might prove a strong temptation. For this reason it is well to avoid any suggestion of this nature.

Vulgarity of any description is forbidden. Scenes depicting women of the streets or other suggestive occurrences should never be used. Torture has no place on the screen. Burglary is forbidden except where most of the details are omitted. Mischievous pictures which might incite the minds of youngsters to the destruction of property or to any form of excess are not desired. Lynching is not permitted unless the story and scene is set in the old days when the lynch law was in vogue. The unwritten law is not recognized by the censors and is not desired in pictures. Kidnapping is also frowned upon.

The readers' minds will undoubtedly revert to hundreds of Photoplays which abound in all the above crimes and horrors. While this is no doubt true, the Photoplay is surging forward and the distinctions are being drawn more and more closely.

While the censors disapprove of all forms of crime, as stated above, there are times when, in the course of telling a story, they are absolutely necessary and where such a crime is a minor occurrence in the working out of a big plot, the censors will usually permit it to be produced.

After the picture has once passed the National Board of Censors, it is quite possible that, if it is still offensive, it may not pass the Board of Censors located in the various cities, who might insist upon the entire picture being eliminated or, at least, some of the objectionable scenes.

The writer has recently seen a Photoplay founded upon a criminal case which has been a prominent first page story of yellow newspapers for years. It was evidently produced by some misguided firm in the hopes that public interest would cause it to prove a sensation. The censors, however, were unmerciful in their treatment of this film, slashing right and left until it was necessary to send a lecturer with the film so that the audience could make out the story.

It is a pleasing commentary on our public morals that the picture did not prove to be quite the sensation which the producer had anticipated and it is quite probable that this fact will dissuade a further exploitation of dramatized criminals in the Photoplay.



## CHAPTER 6.

### HOW TO WRITE A PHOToplay.

The best way to show how a thing should be done is to do it. For this reason a specimen Photoplay manuscript is reproduced herewith.

The author does not present this story as a model by any means. It is simply a Photoplay worked out in the proper technical manner. It is recommended that the beginner study carefully the manuscript and its accompanying parts.

The name and address of the writer should be written at the top of the first page. On the opposite side write "Submitted at Usual Rates." Photoplaywrights may specify how much they will accept for their story but that is not advisable. Leave it entirely to the discretion of the editor. He will give you all that your story is worth.

Then write the title of your Photoplay, stating the number of scenes and how many interiors and exteriors are used. Interiors are naturally scenes taken in-doors, such as rooms, banquet halls, ball rooms, interiors of hotels, etc. etc. Exteriors suggest anything which takes place in the open—the woods, fields, on the street, on board ship, etc.

Notice in the following Photoplay that, although there are twenty-four scenes, there are only six interiors and eight exteriors. This is due to the fact that a number of the scenes are played in the same setting. For instance, scenes eight, eleven, thirteen and fifteen all take place in Marshall's room. While these represent four separate scenes, only one setting is required.

The manuscript starts with a Synopsis, which is the story in short form, followed by the cast of characters and then by the complete Scenario. These various subjects are explained more fully later on.

To illustrate some of the points mentioned in the chapter of technical terms, "His Manuscript Rejected" is a Cut-in Leader, as the scene opens showing Marshall before the house, then a leader is flashed and then the action goes back to the same scene.

In scene two the newspaper paragraph is also an insert and by specifying "On Screen," the editor knows that this is to be made a part of the picture.

Before scene three we find an ordinary leader, "The Search for Inspiration."

In scene ten is a Bust. In scene nine we see Mrs. Sterling carrying a baby and placing it carefully on the bed. If the little baby were to cry, it would hardly be noticed on the full sized picture. Consequently the camera is brought very close to the baby and the picture of the baby crying is taken at close range. In this manner, the audience will grasp immediately the important point of the crying baby. With this introduction, we reproduce "The Inspiration," asking that the student or reader study it with care.



**"THE INSPIRATION."****A Drama in Twenty-Four Scenes.  
Six Interiors and Eight Exteriors.****SYNOPSIS.**

Marshall Sumner, a poverty stricken young writer, determines to compete for the \$1000 prize offered by the Audubon Literary Circle for the best poem, and starts on his search for inspiration.

Neither the peace of the woods nor the crowds of the city awaken the divine spark. Eventually, finding himself with less than a dollar, he buys a small stock of toy balloons and goes to the park to try his luck selling them.

An old one-armed soldier and his little granddaughter are Marshall's first customers. Seating themselves on the park bench, the old soldier tells the child of his many battles. A fine fire of enthusiasm seizes him and he charges, retreats, and indulges in saber battles, with his cane as a sword, living again scenes of the past. Marshall, in his eagerness, allows his entire stock of balloons to slip away. At last he has found a subject. His poem will be "Echoes of War." In great excitement he rushes to his cheap little room and writes at feverish pace battle scenes flashing through his mind.

Mrs. Sterling, a young widow with an infant child, occupies the room next to Marshall's. She staggers into her room, weak and sick. The baby starts to cry. The crying babe annoys Marshall. In frenzy, he feels his inspiration slipping from him. Rushing to the door between the two rooms, he shakes it savagely. It gives way. He finds himself face to face with Mrs. Sterling, her babe in her arms and the soft beautiful light of motherhood in her eyes. So Madonna-like and beautiful is the spectacle that he stands amazed. Mrs. Sterling sinks back weakly. Marshall, divining hunger, gives her what little food he has and is deeply moved when she kisses his hand in gratitude.

He returns to his own room and tries to restore the zest and fire of battle. Failing, he tears the manuscript and sinks sobbing upon the table. Suddenly, in a vision, Marshall sees again the soft, beautiful expression of the sick mother and a new, true inspiration is born. In wonder and awe, he makes a fresh start, "Mother Love" his subject. With eyes fixed upon the vision, he writes as one in a dream. Upon finishing, he reads the poem and is overwhelmed with its lofty beauty and human appeal. He falls on his knees in thanksgiving.

On the specified day the poems are read to the judges, three famous literary men, by a professional reader. From merely dull to absolutely ridiculous, the poems are discarded one by one and lay in a heap on the floor. Marshall's poem "Mother Love" is opened but, not being typewritten, is thrown with the discarded manuscripts, unread.

Judge J., being very warm and bored, picks up "Mother Love" and uses the manuscript as a fan. The secretary of the Audubon Circle enters to find what progress has been made. In derision, Judge J. points to the heap of manuscripts and to show how ridiculous they are, opens his improvised fan and begins to read "Mother Love" aloud. He stops suddenly and reads with new interest. Then he springs to his feet shouting, "Gentlemen, it's the most wonderful poem ever written." The reader, unwillingly, reads the poem but even he is inspired as he progresses. The judges are deeply moved by the recital and at its completion enthusiastically proclaim it the winner.

Marshall receives the check in the nick of time. Taking four steps at a time to her room, he drags the surprised Mrs. Sterling and her babe to a cafe, orders everything on the bill of fare, and the story closes with Marshall, in deep reverence, proposing the toast to Life's most beautiful reality—"Mother Love."



## CHARACTERS.

Marshall Sumner, a poverty-stricken writer.

Mrs. Sterling, a young widow.

The Baby.

Hiram Rawlston, an old G. A. R.

Margery, his grand-daughter.

Postman in 1.

Lounger in 2.

Officer and Supers in 4.

Balloon Maker and Supers in 5.

Three Judges, reader and Secretary in 16.

## THE INSPIRATION.

### Scenario.

- 1 - - - - Street exterior of a cheap boarding house. Marshall Sumner enters from house. Awaits eagerly the postman's call.

Leader

### HIS MANUSCRIPT REJECTED.

Back to Scene.

Postman arrives, gives Marshall large envelope. He opens it. Deeply dejected. Takes a few coins from pocket, shakes head sadly. Braces up, forces himself to whistle, and walks jauntily down the street.

- 2 - - - - Park.

Lounger seated on bench reading. Enter Marshall, sits down, fills pipe from practically empty tobacco sack and throws sack away. Lounger departs, leaving paper. Marshall picks it up—glances over it carelessly. Suddenly shows interest.

On Screen—Newspaper Paragraph.

\$1000 FOR PRIZE POEM.

Offered by Audubon Circle.

Poets, amateur and professional, will be delighted with the announcement of the Audubon Literary Circle issued to the press today.

A cash prize of \$1000 will be given for the best poem submitted.

Back to Scene.

Marshall deeply interested. Registers determination to compete for prize. Takes out rejected manuscript. Regards it sorrowfully; it will not do.

Leader

### THE SEARCH FOR INSPIRATION.

- 3 - - - - A deep Picturesque Wood.

Marshall discovered. Register's desire to attune his soul to nature's grandeur. Finally gives up and exits.

- 4 - - - - A Busy Street.

Marshall watching the busy scene, hurries after an interesting face; then shows disappointment. Enter Mrs. Sterling with babe in arm. An officer sees her stagger. Thinking her drunk, officer starts to arrest her. Marshall interferes. Places hand to woman's forehead. Registers "She's sick, not drunk." Officer turns angrily on Marshall. Gathering crowd menace officer. He, shamefacedly, departs. In the excitement Mrs. Sterling runs away. Marshall looking for her is disappointed and again registers his failure.

- 5 - - - - A Street on the lower East Side.

In the foreground, a toy balloon maker's shop. Several Greeks buying balloons. Enter Marshall, takes in scene. Draws from pocket a few coins, his last. Registers "Beggars can't be Choosers." Buys twelve balloons and starts away.

- 6 - - - - Park Scene.

Marshall tries to sell balloons to passers-by. Fails. Sits dejectedly on park bench. Enter Rawlston, a one-armed G. A. R., and little grand-daughter. Rawlston sees balloon man. Touches Marshall on shoulder, buys balloon. Both Marshall and girl register delight. Rawlston and girl sit on bench.



Leader

## THE SPIRIT OF '61.

Back to Scene.

Rawlston begins to tell of his battles. As memory brings back the thrilling scenes of by-gone days, the old soldier seems to shed his decrepitude. With fire and energy, he pictures the battle in pantomime. Marshall interested. Uses walking stick in illustrating charge, retreat, saber fights, etc. At finish, sinks back in happy exhaustion, the laughing child around his neck.

Leader

## INSPIRED AT LAST.

### HE WILL WRITE "THE ECHOES OF WAR."

Back to Scene.

Marshall greatly excited. Aglow with enthusiasm. In his excitement, he releases strings and balloons fly away. Marshall shows no regret—starts eagerly away.

7 - - - A Street.

Marshall hurrying along in fever of excitement.

8 - - - Marshall's Room.

Cheaply furnished—Signs of poverty. Enter Marshall, still excited, tears off collar, tie, and coat. Starts to write with great fervor. (Shows Visions of battle scenes to illustrate his writings.)

Leader

## THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR.

9 - - - Mrs. Sterling's Room.

Similar in appearance to Marshall's. Enter Mrs. Sterling carrying baby. Staggered to bed. Lays babe tenderly on bed. Then throws herself upon bed in delirium.

10 - - - Bust.

Baby crying.

11 - - - Same as 8.

Marshall's room. Marshall writing feverishly. Starts as he hears crying babe. Tries to concentrate thoughts. Writes and scratches out again. Shows great annoyance. Puts hand over ears, tears hair, paces floor. Registers distraction. In rage, goes to door between the two rooms. Shakes it savagely; door gives way.

12 - - - Same as 9.

Mrs. Sterling's room with door open. Marshall stands in surprise. Mrs. Sterling has raised herself, her baby in arms. An expression so beautiful and Madonna-like surmounts her face, that Marshall is amazed at the apparition. The beautiful gleam of mother love is in her eyes, her poor emaciated face lighted up with a soft and tender smile. Mrs. Sterling sinks weakly. Marshall rushes to her assistance. Divining hunger, he searches for food; finding none, he re-enters his own room.

12 - - - Same as 8.

Marshall's room. Marshall goes to his cupboard. Takes out a half-filled bottle of milk and a few crackers; looks at them longingly, draws his belt two notches tighter, then takes them to Mrs. Sterling.

14 - - - Same as 9. Mrs. Sterling's Room.

Enter Marshall with milk and crackers. Mrs. Sterling eats ravenously, Marshall plays with baby. Finished eating, Mrs. Sterling grasps Marshall's hand and kisses it. He, quite overcome with emotion, exits.

5 - - - Same as 8. Marshall's Room.

Marshall enters, registers "Pretty hard on a woman." Then shakes himself. Tries to bring back the fire of the war poem, even imitates the old soldier's actions. Registers failure. Picks up manuscript and reads. Shakes head sadly; then tears up the manuscript and lets it fall at his feet. In misery over his failure, he throws himself upon the table, sobbing.

Leader

## A NEW, TRUE INSPIRATION.

### MOTHER-LOVE.

Back to Scene.

Marshall slowly raises head, a gleam of inspiration in his eye. In his mind's eye (vision) he sees again the mother and her babe. (See Scene 12.) Marshall's breath comes and goes quickly. He is face to face with a theme that will strike an universal chord in the hearts of men. As one in a dream, he sits down, his eyes sparkling and fixed upon the vision.



He writes, scarcely glancing upon the sheet. The poem is finished. He reads it with great joy. It is a masterpiece. Humbly and with deep emotion he sinks upon his knees in thanksgiving.

Leader

### JUDGING THE POEMS.

16 - - - -

Reading Room—Audubon Literary Circle.  
Handsome interior. Three judges of contest listening to reading of poems by professional reader. Judges show signs, now of weariness, then laugh over some ridiculous effort. Large pile of rejected manuscripts on floor.

Leader

"THIS ONE IS NOT TYPEWRITTEN.

I CAN HARDLY MAKE IT OUT."

Back to Scene.

Reader picks up "Mother Love." Looks at it; frowns. Turns to judges, shakes his head, and without reading, throws it on the rejected heap. Judges mop brow during scene, register Summer weather. Judge J. looks around for something to use as a fan. He picks up "Mother Love" and fans self. Enter Secretary of Club. Inquires about progress of the contest. Judge J. points sarcastically to pile of rejected manuscripts. In derision, he opens his improvised fan to show the Secretary what poor stuff has been submitted. Starts to read, expression changes. Registers greater interest as he proceeds. At finish, Judge J. holds manuscript high above his head and exclaims:

Leader

"GENTLEMEN, IT'S THE GREATEST POEM EVER WRITTEN."

Back to Scene.

Other judge startled. Reader grudgingly takes manuscript. Starts to read. As he progresses, judges listen with awed reverence. Judge H. removes glasses and wipes the corner of his eyes. The appeal of Motherhood, the simple, beautiful conception strikes a responsive chord in the hearts of even the calloused judges. They joyously shake hands, proclaiming it the prize poem.

17 - - - -

Street.

In front of restaurant. Marshall very thin and pale, looks in wistfully. Pedestrian throws down newspaper. Marshall picks it up greedily. Shouts up and down street trying to sell the paper. Looks at paper. Registers great joy. Rushes off.

18 - - - -

Same as 1. In front of boarding house.

Landlady on steps looking up and down street; she has newspaper in hand. Waves and holds up letter. Marshall enters on the run. She gives him letter, congratulating him. Hurriedly, Marshall tears it open, takes out check. In his excitement, he hugs the landlady, dances with her, then seeming to remember something, he rushes into house.

19 - - - -

Flight of Stairs.

Marshall seen taking three steps at a time.

20 - - - -

Same as 9. Mrs. Sterling's room.

Mrs. Sterling sewing; aroused by knock. Enter Marshall, in great excitement. Takes her hands and dances in delight. Takes Mrs. Sterling's hat from hook, jams it on her head, picks up baby and starts to drag her out. Mrs. Sterling amazed.

21 - - - -

Same as 19. Staircase.

Marshall dragging Mrs. Sterling downstairs.

22 - - - -

Street.

Same business.

23 - - - -

Same as 17. In front of restaurant.

24 - - - -

Interior of Restaurant.

Marshall enters, drags Mrs. Sterling in. They sit at table, babe in high chair. Marshall orders everything on bill of fare. Crowd of waiters bringing loads of dishes, also wine.

Leader

"TO LIFE'S MOST BEAUTIFUL REALITY. MOTHER LOVE."

Back to Scene.

Marshall arises with wine glass in hand, proposes toast, then drinks in reverence.

*The End.*

Name of Author.

Address.



## CHAPTER 7.

### HOW TO WRITE A SYNOPSIS.

Having mastered the preceding details, we are now ready to start upon the actual writing of the Photoplay. Begin by placing at the top of the first page the writer's name and address, opposite write "Submitted at Usual Rates," or state the amount you expect to receive for same. It is advised that the former be used, leaving the compensation to the liberality of the editor, who will give you all that your story is worth.

Write your manuscript on a good bond letter paper, size 8½x 11 inches. Write on one side of the paper only. Do not write it in long hand as most editors are very strict upon this subject and will not read anything but typewritten manuscripts.

In the present day when a typewriter can be purchased for from \$15.00 up, anyone can own a machine; nor is it advised that you buy a small and cheap machine. Rebuilt typewriters can be purchased at very low prices and are practically as good as many new machines.

Typewriters are also rented by various exchanges for \$5.00 for four months and even less. It is not difficult to master the use of the machine. A few hours' practice will do it. If, however, you cannot get a typewriter in this way, write out your manuscript in long hand and then get it typewritten by a typist.

Be sure that your manuscript is clean. Do not fold it more than twice so that it will fit into a legal sized or No. 10 envelope. Don't pin or fasten the manuscripts together at the top. You can get a clip which will hold the papers firmly but without fastening them together, at any stationers.

Follow, carefully, the proper style in the writing of your synopsis, cast of characters and scenario. This is of the utmost importance.

The synopsis itself is perhaps the most important part of the Photoplay. It tells, in short form, the author's complete story. It should be made as clear and concise as possible.

The Vitagraph and Edison Companies specify that not more than 250 words should be used in the synopsis. When you send your manuscripts to these firms, it is well to comply with their request. If, however, you cannot tell your complete story in 250 words, do not try to force it at the risk of making your story less interesting or confusing.

Boil it down to the very lowest possible point. Write and rewrite, cut out as many words and descriptive phrases as possible, until you have the very essence of the story.

The synopsis serves a double purpose. The editor, upon opening your manuscript, reads the synopsis first of all. If it suggests a good, interesting and original story to follow, he will then study your cast of characters and delve into the scenario, going over it scene by scene. If he goes that far, your chance for receiving a check is fairly strong.

The synopsis is also used by many firms, for their advertising in trade papers. They give the title and short synopsis to give the exhibitor or theater manager an idea of the nature of the picture.



In the foregoing manuscript, the 250-word limit has been exceeded. If you wish, take the synopsis and see just how you could further reduce it without losing any of the points of interest. It will prove good practice.

The synopsis should be written on the first sheet of paper directly under the title of the story. The cast of characters on same page. If it requires two pages for the synopsis and cast of characters, allow that space.

Single spacing on the typewriter is generally desired, although there is no set rule on this point.

The second part of your manuscript is the characters. Only the principal characters need be listed. Again we revert to the manuscript in preceding chapter. You will note that the five principal characters are mentioned under that heading. Such characters as the Postman, Lounger, Officers, etc., which are played by extras, or supernumeraries, are noted at the bottom, together with the number of the scene in which they appear.

This is an aid to the director in making a proper production of the play. While the names of the characters are of minor importance, here also use your ingenuity. A very good habit is to carry a notebook. If you see a name, whether on sign board, advertisement or story, which appeals particularly to you, jot it down.

If a newspaper paragraph contains a French, Italian or Spanish name that is euphonious and attractive, make a note of it. It may come in handy in your very next Photoplay. For that matter the name itself and the character may suggest a complete story and an interesting train of suggestions.

Do not use too many principal characters and, having once introduced them, try to keep them constantly in the mind of the spectators. It is folly to introduce a character at the beginning of a Photoplay and then forget all about him until some very important circumstance towards the end of the play requires his presence. By that time the audience has long forgotten that there was such a character. Newcomers may have arrived who have perhaps caught the general drift of the picture but are confused by this seemingly new character. Make your characters clean cut and consistent. Once having started your subject continue to the end.

Some Photoplaywrights give a short description of each character directly after the name of the character to better enable the producer to visualize the human beings they had in mind when the story was written. The advisability of this is questionable. The producer is usually an old hand who knows just what kind of a character you are introducing before he has read half way through your synopsis.

Choose simple names. By simple we do not mean such names as "John Jones" or "Henry Smith," but avoid such names as "Murgatroyd Gillingwater" or other names which used to abound in the family story papers.

A good test of your synopsis is to let some plain-spoken acquaintance or stranger read it over and see whether he finds the story of interest. Friends are apt to be partial.



## CHAPTER 8.

### HOW TO WRITE SCENARIO.

Having finished the synopsis and characters, start the Scenario on a fresh sheet of paper. Place the name of the author on the top just as before. Follow it with the title of the Photoplay and immediately beneath it, write the word "Scenario."

Now start at the beginning of your story. In the margin put the number of the scene and allow precisely the same margin for leaders, inserts, etc., so that the producer can look right down the column and see how many scenes there are, how many leaders and any other information he may desire. See Chapter Six.

Now describe everything that occurs in your first scene as plainly as you can and in just as few words as possible. While the editor is most interested in the synopsis, the producer finds the Scenario his right hand bower. It tells him just what what scenes the author had in mind, what the characters are supposed to do and express in order to make the story clear to the audience.

You will often find that directly after the title of the photoplay is flashed on the screen, a leader follows it to acquaint the spectator with such information as the author considers necessary. This habit is to a certain extent, frowned upon. If possible it is much better to start right in with the action of the play immediately after the title has been shown. Introduce your characters with as much local color as possible, then insert your first leader.

This is illustrated in chapter six, where the street exterior is shown with Marshall entering from the house and looking up and down the street awaiting the postman's call. We might just as well have placed the leader directly after the title and some Photoplaywrights consider this the proper thing to do. It is largely a matter of personal preference and choice.

Photoplays may have anywhere from 20 to 50 scenes. It is hardly advisable to have more than 35 if it can be avoided. While you may devote a scene to any interesting feature which will help to further your story do not be too liberal with scenes for minor details. Remember that you have only 1000 feet to a reel. If your story is not long enough to cover 1000 feet make it sufficiently short for a split reel but do not try to stretch a meager story over an entire reel by inserting a lot of ridiculous and minor details which must prove uninteresting.

Try to get into the atmosphere and phraseology of the moving picture world. Do not say "George comes in," "George goes out," use the words "enter-" and "exit." If you introduce a newspaper paragraph, write it out in full. Do not tell in narrative form what the newspaper paragraph should contain.

In the foregoing manuscript, you will find the word "register" frequently used. It signifies that the character must impress upon the spectator's mind his emotions and feelings. Where a statement will serve to forcibly illustrate what you want to convey, use it. For instance in Scene four, Marshall registers "She's Sick Not Drunk." This could be explained otherwise "Marshall tells the officer that the woman is sick and not drunk" requiring twelve words instead of four. Naturally the short form is to be desired.

The same is true of leaders. Use quotations where they will prove more forcible than statements. For instance, "THIS ONE IS NOT TYPEWRITTEN; I CAN HARDLY MAKE IT OUT." Suppose we were to express it otherwise, thus, "THE READER CANNOT MAKE OUT THE MANUSCRIPT BE-



**CAUSE IT IS NOT TYPEWRITTEN.** It is easy to see why the former is preferable. Then again, in the scene which immediately follows, the actor who is playing the part of the reader will probably say those very words and the audience can understand by the motion of his lips just what it is that he is saying. The same is true of the second leader in the same scene "Gentlemen, it's the greatest poem ever written." This is far more forcible than "Judge J. declares it the best poem ever written."

In this way, wherever it is logical to introduce the spoken word of one of your characters and increase the strength of the suggestion do so. Above all, avoid long narratives. Your Scenario should be full of ACTION. Memorize that word; it is the most important in the Photoplay Lexicon.

## CHAPTER 9.

### INSERTS.

Leaders can be considered an absolute necessity in the present day Photoplay. What the future may have in store, we cannot say, but where every circumstance and action must be expressed in pantomime, it is necessary now and then to introduce a little explanatory sentence here. It gives the spectators a clearer understanding of what is to follow. But though leaders are necessary, they should be indulged in as little as possible.

Never use a leader when you can get along without one, but never neglect to use a leader where it is necessary to make an important point clear to the spectator. The fewer leaders you have in your manuscript, the better, provided that you are not leaving them out where they are really absolutely necessary. A leader may well be called a crutch of the photoplay. The less you have to use it the better. The same is true of letters, newspaper paragraphs, telegrams, etc.

The audience is always more ready to follow the action of characters than to read some dull and prosy inserts. Those inserts which are absolutely necessary, must of course be introduced, but make them short and just as interesting as you possibly can. In many cases, the writer has witnessed photoplays with a great many inserts of various kinds which might well have been eliminated.

In one such picture among other unnecessary leaders was **ARNOLD REFUSES THE OFFER**. As the audience was fully aware that an offer was being made to Arnold, it only needed pantomime to show that the offer had not been accepted.

While it is not well to place the spectators' intelligence on too high a plane, neither is it necessary to resort to such unnecessary explanations.

Make your letters and paragraphs as short as possible. By that we do not mean that in a letter which a man might write to his wife from a distant city that you should say "Don't tell the Pinkertons where I am," and nothing more. Suppose that this information must be conveyed. A man is writing to his wife. His letter would not contain just this one blank statement. We do not want to reproduce the entire letter so we can make it seem as though this were the second page of the letter and start in the middle of the sentence as if continuing something which had been started on the previous page, "and do the best I can. Don't tell the Pinkerton's where I am." This makes it seem more logical.

Inserts of any kind are a necessary evil but they are an evil and should be avoided wherever possible. Action is the by-word and inserts of any kind are not action.



## CHAPTER 10.

### HOW TO GET IDEAS FOR PLOTS.

Ideas are like germs. The very air is surcharged with them. They are here, there and everywhere. They suggest themselves to the inventive mind at every turn. For example, "The Inspiration" was suggested by the crying of a baby when the writer of this photoplay was trying to work out an idea for a plot. A similar incident suggested one of the most successful farces in the photoplay world.

Ideas lurk everywhere. You will find them in magazines and newspaper articles, in real life, wherever you go. All it needs is to be wide-awake. Get the plot habit. This is nothing more nor less than to try to turn every incident that comes to your notice into some kind of a story.

A note book should be the constant companion of every writer. Thoughts are extremely valuable. They come at the most unexpected time and a note book should always be at hand to jot them down quickly before they may be forgotten. The writer knows of one plot in particular which seemed baffling; no logical or consistent outlet seemed to be possible. Hours of thought were spent, without result. Several days after, like a flash, a highly satisfactory solution presented itself. It was immediately jotted down and the story completed.

Look for plots everywhere. If you are at a loss where to turn for your next story, try to imagine some interesting character. When you can visualize or see the character standing before you, try to put that person in some interesting, dramatic or humorous situation.

While there should be plenty of action in the photoplay you write, do not think that there must be a-thrill-a-minute. Your climax should occur well towards the last of your picture and the interest should be sustained from the beginning to the end. After the climax, finish the story as quickly as possible.

There may be something in your own life or that of your neighbor or friend which may suggest a photoplay. Dramatic actions occur many times a day in real life to different people and still they cannot be called photoplay stories. Taking, however, such actions as the germ of the plot and working backwards to a possible beginning of the relations of these people and building up an interesting and thrilling story therefrom is perfectly permissible.

Copyrighted stories cannot be used as moving picture play plots, but if you find one that is extremely interesting and in your mind is suitable for a photoplay, use one or two of the incidents in the story, but change them entirely. Put them into a different environment, change the very incident itself, as nearly as possible, with the result that you will have an entirely different story, although the main theme may bear a resemblance to the original.

It is folly for the Photoplaywright to copy slavishly a magazine story, especially if it is copyrighted. It may plunge the producer into litigation and once a playwright has the reputation for being a plagiarist, his manuscripts will be returned, unread.

You will find themes and stories all around you. You will find them in old books, you may read and the dramatization is permissible. A great many of the best known stories have already been dramatized so that it is folly to try

the dramatization of a story unless you know that it has not been previously done. Still, if the idea impresses you as a good one, write a different story, changing the central idea as much as possible. You will find that before you are half way through, the theme which you took from the old work has been subdued and you have built a much stronger one yourself.

A single incident or bit of business in other photoplays may suggest a completely different train of thought that will make a photoplay which is your original work. Cultivate the plot habit, seeing the plot in everything about you and you will not want for ideas.

## **CHAPTER 11.**

### **WHAT IS WANTED FOR TWO OR THREE-REEL SUBJECTS.**

At the beginning, it is very desirable for the photoplaywright to confine himself to one reel subjects. There is, however, a growing demand for multiple reel subjects for which the photoplaywright may strive, after he has succeeded in the writing of several acceptable one reel subjects.

Mr. Lawrence McCloskey of the Lubin Co., recently gave some excellent advice on the subject of two and three reel subjects in *The Moving Picture World* and as his words on that score bear the weight of authority, they are reproduced herewith.

### **WRITING MULTIPLE REEL STORIES.**

**By Lawrence S. McCloskey.**

The following applies only to immediate requirements of the Lubin Company in regard to multiple reel photoplays. We do not wish to make any hard and fast rules governing the kind of stories demanded, because we are, first of all, in search of the unusual. Therefore, if any writer has worked or is working out a story along lines diverging from those here defined, providing he feels that his work has character enough to warrant our setting aside precedent, he is urged to submit the story.

We want forceful stories—not necessarily full of violent action, yet with plenty of wholesome bang to them. Delicate sentiment, subtle wit may be appreciated, but compelling motive and virile action are absolutely necessary to hold the interest of an average audience for half or three quarters of an hour.

To warrant production in more than one reel, a story should not only contain a big, gripping situation, but the scenes leading up to it should be interesting enough to lead the minds of its spectators to a point where the punch—the real point of the story—will strike with most force; produce the thrill which is sought by the spectator.

The most gripping situation, the most spectacular stunt, will fail to thrill an audience that has been sitting through a long succession of dull, merely explanatory scenes. Something interesting must be doing all the time, and the incidents must lead logically, artfully, up to the climax.

We do not insist upon a punch in each reel. If two or three reels are required to reach a situation worth going that distance to reach, it would not be good to go afield for "punches" (which would really not be punches at all) to insert at measured distances.



The best example of construction I've seen is "The District Attorney's Conscience." All the characters were introduced in the first few scenes and each stepped right into a situation that created instant conjecture. Throughout the two reels there was not an uninteresting or unnecessary scene. The story became more complicated, but not confusing, and gripped to the end. Yet, in this picture, there was nothing spectacular—no "big effects" or crashing climax.

Stories of modern American life are most in demand, not merely for the reason that no special costumes, props or environment are necessary to their production, but because they are really most interesting to the public at large.

Humanity is more interested in life and problems of today than in the things that happened in the long ago.

While modern life may afford few new themes, modern ideas and beliefs should suggest novel ways of treating the old ones.

The writer who accepts as a fact that "there's nothing new under the sun" handicaps himself. In as much as it may serve to make him cautious, that old saying is good, but an author with the right kind of stuff in him should consider it a challenge. Even though he never succeeds in entirely disproving the statement, his earnest endeavor to do so is sure to result in some good work. Every little while someone grasps an old and thoroughly respected situation, turns it over on its other side and lets the old sun hit it from a new angle, with very pleasing effect. This can go on as long as civilization advances and people's views regarding life's problems keep changing.

It is best to use one set of characters and to avoid long lapse of time.

We prefer that scenes be numbered consecutively throughout. The author can signify by marginal note about where he intends the story to be divided.

We like a synopsis that tells the entire story, avoiding, of course, trivial details. It is not enough to put a character into a certain situation and say "after a series of remarkable adventures, John succeeds in vindicating himself." The adventures should be described in a general way. We place no limit upon the number of words in synopsis, but believe most two-reel stories can be confined to five hundred words.

Our city studio is surrounded by all accessories available in any large city.

Our estate at Betzwood, Pa., (the name of which, by the way, has been changed to Lubin, Pa.), embraces forest, river, creeks, wharves, hills, valleys, railroad, bridges, farm buildings, manor house, quarries, cliffs, and is well stocked with horses, cattle, sheep, swine, poultry, etc. Most any kind of outdoor photoplay can be staged on the place.

## CHAPTER 12.

### GENERAL INFORMATION.

In submitting your manuscript to the editor of a producing company, it is not necessary to send a letter with it. In fact, it is distinctly taboo to write letters to the editors. Inasmuch as the editors are busy men, they have not time to devote to reading letters from hundreds of contributors. Simply put your name and address in the left hand corner of the first sheet of your manuscript. It is advisable to put opposite your name and address "Submitted at regular rates."

The manuscript, as before stated, should be typewritten, carefully bearing in mind that the neater it is the better impression it will create with the editor. Large manuscript envelopes can be bought cheap enough, and where possible, manuscripts should not be folded. It is advisable to place the manuscript between two pieces of straw or cardboard. In the event that your play is returned by one producing company, providing it has not been folded, it will look neat and clean to submit to other companies.

While it is an acknowledged fact that there is a shortage of good manuscripts, yet hundreds of "would-be" plays are received by the producing companies each week. Owing to this fact, it is necessary to include return postage with your manuscript. Producing companies return all manuscripts only providing return postage is included.

When typewriting your photoplay always make two carbon copies. In case of fire or loss in transit you will then have exact copies of the original. Do not make the mistake of sending a carbon copy to an editor. In this event he will gain the impression that you have submitted the original copy to another company and he will refuse to consider it. In case of acceptance you can file your carbon copies and use them for reference and style when working on new ideas.

Every producing company has an editorial department just the same as a newspaper or magazine has. The editor is the one who has the option of accepting or rejecting your manuscript, but often a delay occurs when the matter is in doubt. For instance, your idea may seem rather a good one to the editor and in that case your manuscript will be placed in a basket or drawer for "further consideration." This may mean that the editor will read your manuscript through again and more carefully at a later date, when more convenient to him or her (lots of the editors are ladies). On the other hand, your idea may appeal to the editor but he may have to confer with the producer on certain points. It may be a good plot but impracticable from the viewpoint of camera production. All this may mean a delay of a few weeks,



but it is very seldom that a writer does not hear from the editor as to the disposition of the manuscript. This delay point is emphasized simply because beginners are prone to become impatient and start writing a series of letters to the editor regarding their plays. When the matter is in doubt save your postage and begin working on another idea.

Remember that an editor's rejection means just one person's opinion and there may be a number of reasons why the manuscript has been rejected. It is possible that the story does not fit the cast of the company receiving your manuscript; that they have an over-abundance of material at the time you submit; that they are not producing the kind of play you have written at the time of submitting. Then again, you may have rehashed an old subject, something like it may have been produced, etc., etc.

Another company may be glad to buy the manuscript; therefore, it is wise to have each manuscript travel the rounds of all the producing companies in the country before you finally give that particular manuscript up as a bad job. Some producing companies will send a short note stating just why they cannot accept it. Then it is up to you to rewrite it, keeping in mind the professional criticism.

One thing is essential to the ambitious photoplay writer. The trade press. There are several good weekly and monthly publications on the market that will give the beginner valuable hints in the matter of style, technique and, above all, the market demand. Half the success in selling photoplays is in submitting them at the psychological moment. In other words, if the Blank Company are in the market for comedy plays or dramas, then if you send in your comedy or drama, as the case may be, the chances are your effort will get the best of attention. The Motion Picture World, published in New York City, is a paper that will prove of great help to beginners. It is published every Tuesday. It contains sample scenarios of the principal plays, market reports on the wants of the various companies and general information beneficial to photoplay writers.

There are other papers of merit and it is as well to subscribe to, or buy as many as you find of value. The careful reading of the releases of the producing companies will show you just what subjects appeal most to each company.

The titles of the releases show you, if you are observant, just what titles to use and not to use.

Last, but not least, attend the moving picture theatre just as often as you can. Go to study rather than from the amusement viewpoint. See what other writers are doing. Notice the latest effects which are being introduced. Get an idea as to the number of actual scenes in a single reel. Criticise each

picture and find out in your mind how you would handle the subject. By working out these problems the actual work of writing up your own ideas becomes easier. In fact, photoplay writing is not hard.

A list of the principal producing companies and their location is appended. It must be borne in mind that new companies are continually making appearance and, in all cases, it is advisable to follow the markets in the trade papers before submitting.

**AMERICAN FILM COMPANY**, Ashland Bldg., Chicago.

**BIOGRAPH COMPANY**, 807 E. 175th St., New York City.

**ESSANAY FILM COMPANY**, 1315 Argyle St., Chicago.

**LUBIN MFG. COMPANY**, 29th St., Philadelphia.

**THE VITAGRAPH COMPANY**, E. 15th St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

**SELIG POLYSCOPE COMPANY**, 20 Randolph St., Chicago.

**KEYSTONE MOTION PICTURE COMPANY**, 1719 Allesandro St., Edendale,  
Los Angeles, Cal.

**KINEMACOLOR COMPANY**, 1600 Broadway, New York City.

**THOS. A. EDISON, Inc.**, 2826 Decatur Ave., Bedford Park, Bronx, New York  
City.

**THE UNIVERSAL FILM MFG. COMPANY**, Broadway and 48th St., New  
York City. One rejection from this company covers the **BISON, CHAM-  
PION, GEM, CRYSTAL, IMP, NESTOR, REX** and **POWERS**. Submit  
manuscripts to Pacific Coast Studio, Hollywood, California, or to 1600  
Broadway, New York City.

**THANHOUSER COMPANY**, New Rochelle, N. Y.

**SOLAX COMPANY**, Fort Lee, N. J.

**RELIANCE COMPANY**, 540 W. 21st St., New York City.

**PATHE-FRERES COMPANY**, Jersey City Heights, N. J.

**AMERICAN FILM MFG. COMPANY**, Santa Barbara, California.

**ECLAIR FILMS COMPANY**, Fort Lee, N. J.

**MAJESTIC MOTION PICTURE COMPANY**, 540 W. 21st St., New York City.

**KALEM COMPANY**, 235 W. 23rd St., New York City.

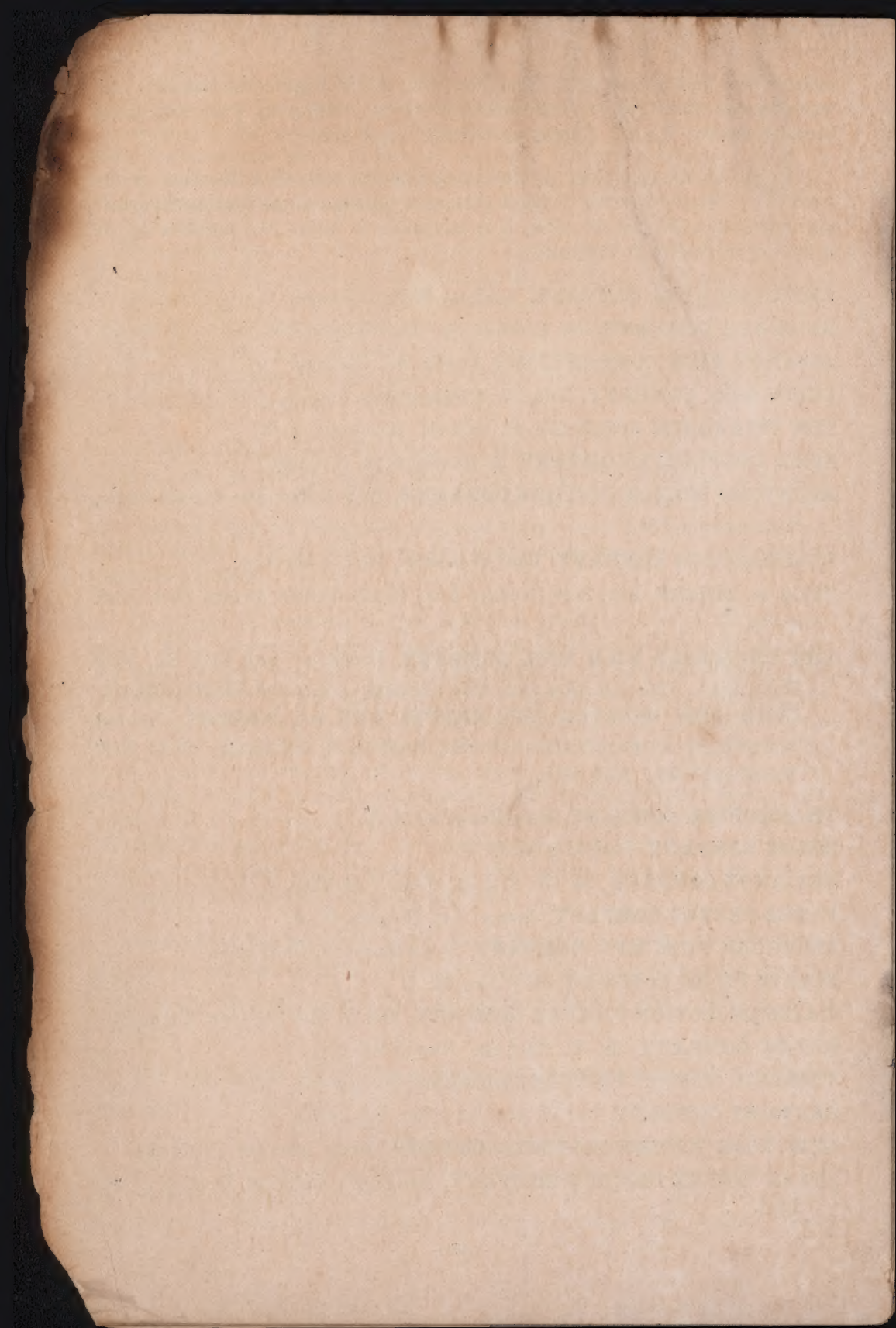
**STERLING MOTION PICTURE COMPANY**, Hollywood, California.

**GAUMONT COMPANY**, 110 W. 40th St., New York City.

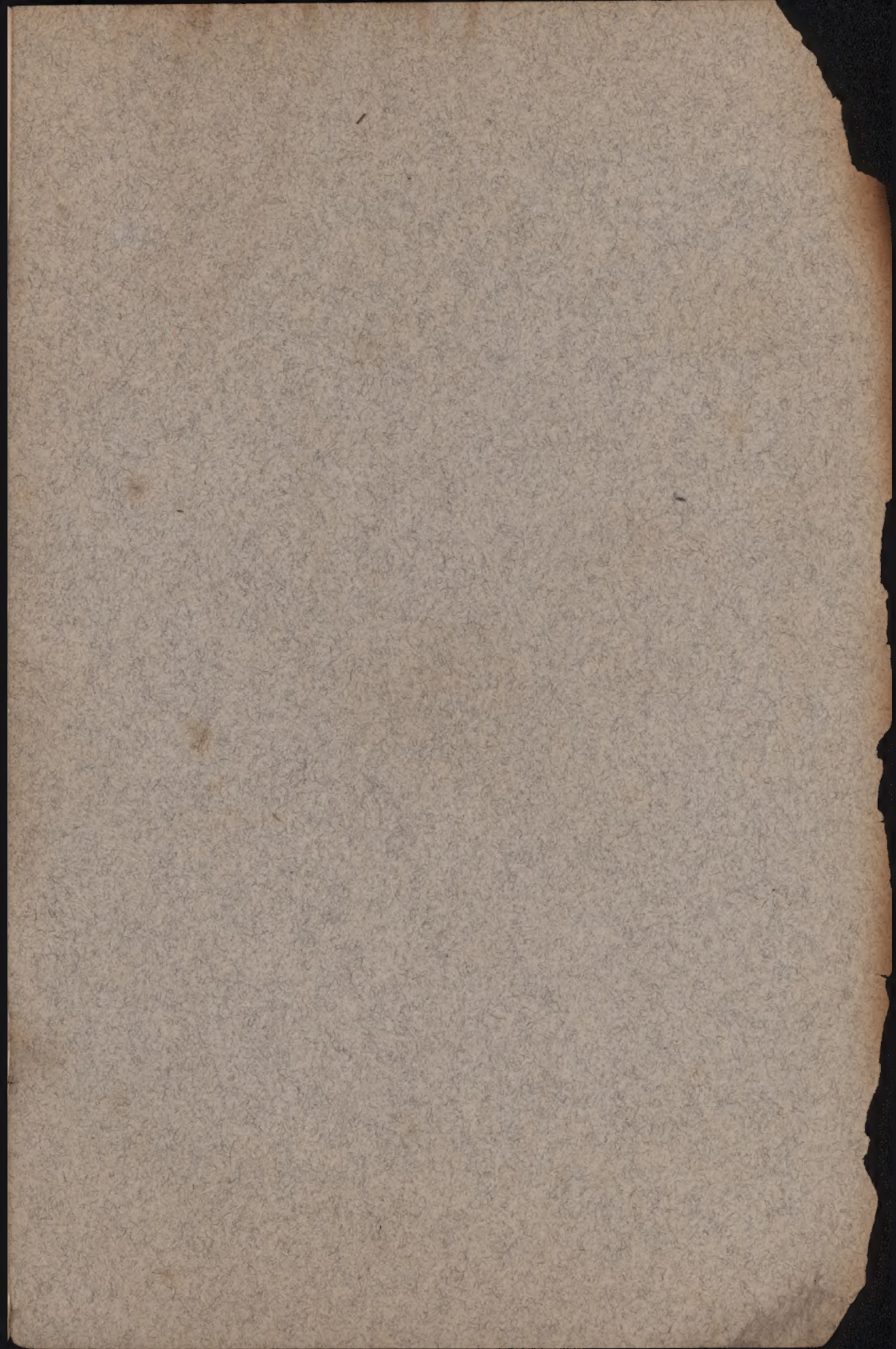
**NEW YORK MOTION PICTURE COMPANY**, Santa Monica, California.

**ATLAS MOTION PICTURE COMPANY**, 600 Ligett Building, Detroit, Mich-  
igan.

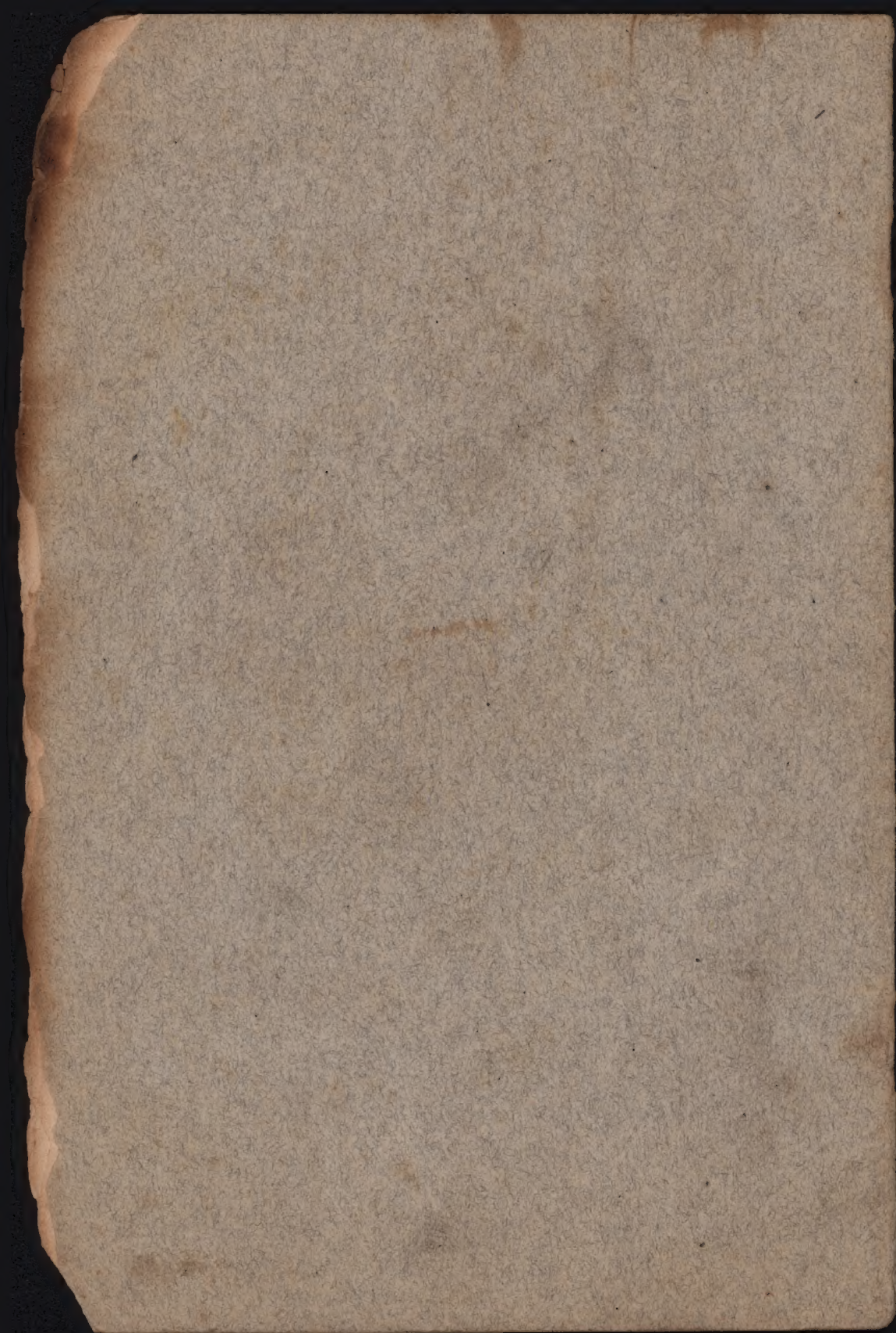














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